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JADEN AND KYLIE, SITTIN' IN A TREE {page 10}

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PHILADELPHIA
Tuesday, March 5, 2013

CASE UPDATE

Day care worker hit with more charges

- Tianna Edwards charged with theft, deception after grand jury indictment
- Family of boy who drowned in Edwards' care last June files lawsuit {page 02}

Protest. Vote

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

▶ Councilman Jannie Blackwell, pictured, is asking for a one-year hold on the 29 school closings proposed by City Council in a protest outside City Hall yesterday. {page 03}

travel

Come to see divine Providence {page 25}

books

The tragicomedy of life in close-up {page 14}

style

Oui know the hot looks in Paris {pages 16-17}

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More charges for day care operator in child's death

Tianna Edwards allegedly left an ineligible day care worker with the children while she gambled ◆ Suit claims public welfare workers knew of Edwards' fraud

A grand jury on Friday added claims against former Tianna's Terrific Tots day care operator Tianna Edwards in connection with last summer's drowning death of 7-year-old Isear Jeffcoat, district attorney officials announced yesterday.

"I'm not surprised by any of the charges," said attorney Nancy Winkler, who is representing Jeffcoat's mother in a civil suit against Edwards.

Earlier this year, Edwards was charged with involuntary manslaughter and endangerment for allegedly contributing to Jeffcoat's death by failing to properly oversee his care.

The indictment adds charges of fraud, theft by deception and tampering with public records (for Edwards' alleged use of sister Nikita Smith's name to get a day care license).

Edwards' criminal record — which includes convictions for theft, providing false identification to law enforcement and carrying unlicensed firearms — precludes her from operating a day care in the state.

The suit claims state Department of Public Welfare officials were aware of the fraud long before Jeffcoat's death.

The suit also claims the DPW should have further investigated all of Edwards' operations after a laundry list of safety violations caused officials to shutter one location.

"I'm concerned that this failure is not just an isolated failure. I think there needs to be changes system wide," said Winkler.

Alex Wigglesworth
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PHILADELPHIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

▶ Edwards

Jeffcoat's last moments

According to the complaint, Edwards took Jeffcoat and 20 other children from the day care to the home of her mother, Emma Cox-Watson. Edwards then allegedly went gambling.

Watson was seen consuming alcohol that day and eventually became so drunk "she urinated on the front lawn," according to the complaint.

Van "Boobie" Williams, the worker tasked with watching the children as they swam in Watson's pool, had a criminal record rendering him ineligible to work in a day care.

The suit claims staff permitted Jeffcoat to play in the murky pool without flotation devices despite the fact he couldn't swim.

Jeffcoat was last seen by other children some time after lunch, sliding down a slide into the pool's deep end. He apparently began to struggle to stay afloat at some point, the suit claims, but no attempt was made to rescue him.

Though Edwards told staffers to search the bottom of the pool for the boy — instructing one to use a brush and another to buy goggles at a nearby drugstore — she told police and the child's parents around 3 p.m. that he was "missing."

Police recovered Jeffcoat's body from the bottom of the pool 10 hours later. The water was so cloudy that divers had to be dispatched to complete the search.

Laundry list

The suit claims DPW officials should have been aware of hazardous and negligent conditions at Tianna's Terrific Tots' three locations long before Jeffcoat's death. The suit alleges:

- The DPW in December of 2011 met with representatives from the District Attorney's Office, which had charged Edwards with insurance fraud in an unrelated case. Though DPW officials confirmed through a photo comparison that Edwards was using Smith's identity to operate her day care centers, no action was taken.
- A child in 2010 fell unconscious at one of Edwards' locations after swallowing a battery and later died.
- The Office of the Inspector General opened an investigation into Edwards' alleged identity theft in January 2012, but took no action to shut her down.
- The day care's Germantown Avenue location was shut down just two months before Jeffcoat's death due to a laundry list of safety violations that Winkler said "put children's lives in jeopardy."
- A separate suit filed against the day care in January alleges that an employee at the Lawndale Street location two years ago lifted and swung a child so hard he fractured his elbow, sustaining permanent nerve damage.

In the news

IV

The next innovative Samsung smartphone, Galaxy S IV, will include a feature called "eye scrolling." The phone's software will track the users eyes when reading articles and scrolls when their glare reaches the bottom of a page to reveal the next paragraphs of text, according to the New York Times. The phone will be introduced on March 14. METRO

Local tweet

"I wish bruno mars would come to philly & something would happen where I'll protect him & he'll fall in love & purpose then we'd have babies!"

@GODDESSNINA_ FINDS THAT A CERTAIN MUSICIAN INSPIRES HER TO CREATE LOCAL-BASED, MODERN-DAY FAIRY TALES.

In the news

Woman stabbed during a fight in Southwest Philadelphia

A 23-year-old woman was stabbed Saturday night during a fight in Southwest Philadelphia.

Police said the woman was fighting an 18-year-old female when she felt pain and noticed she had been stabbed.

Doctors found the woman had been stabbed about 10 times — once in the leg, once in the back of the head, twice in the back and several times in the arm. She is currently hospitalized in stable condition.

Investigators said the suspected teen went with her father to the 12th District police station around midnight and turned herself in. METRO

10

The number of times a 23-year-old woman was stabbed Saturday night during a fight.

Suspect sought in night club shooting

Police are looking for a man who allegedly fired shots into a crowd early Sunday morning outside of Roar Nightclub at 720 Arch St.

FACEBOOK

▶ Shots were fired outside of Roar Nightclub, pictured, over the weekend.

Police said officers were called to the location just before 2 a.m. to disperse a large, disorderly crowd that was fighting. They heard gunshots. Three of the responding officers saw a man firing a handgun in the direction of Ninth Street.

The man then fled through a parking lot on the corner of Eighth and Arch streets and was able to evade police. No injuries were reported.

The suspect is described as a 6-foot, thin, black male with a beard. He was last seen wearing a white shirt with long blue sleeves and blue jeans. METRO

Bail set at $1M in syringe-point robbery

Bail has been set for $1 million each for two men accused of breaking into a 94-year-old woman's Mayfair home Sunday.

Christopher Brunkel, 31, allegedly forced his way into Sophie Drobish's home on Unruh Street.

Police said he tied the woman up, assaulted her and stole her jewelry. Drobish is hospitalized in stable condition.

The victim's grandson, 27-year-old Gregory Drobish, allegedly acted as a getaway driver.

Both men received several charges. They are next due in court March 21 for a hearing. METRO

Community leaders plead with mayor to fight for freeze on school closings

RICARD LARNA/METRO

▶ Helen Gym, with Parents United For Education, is fighting for her own children who are in the Philadelphia School District during yesterday's protest at City Hall.

Community leaders gathered at City Hall yesterday in a last-ditch effort to compel officials to accept a freeze on the proposed 29 school closings.

State leaders will vote on the closings Thursday. Yesterday, community leaders pleaded for Mayor Michael Nutter to consider alternative proposals.

Quanisha M. Smith, of the Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools, said the officials want a one-year freeze on the plan to close 29 public schools so a third analysis and an exhaustive search for alternatives can begin.

Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell wants to work with local and state leaders on the issue.

"Certainly nobody is saying that some schools shouldn't at some point close," she said, "But let's work together. Nobody had a right … to sit in a room and make these decisions."

City Council has called as a group for a one-year hold on the closings.

Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown said there is recognition of the harsh realities.

"The state is at fault here. Period. If we have to point fingers, let's point them where they need to be," she said.

Brown added that the officials "still believe that not enough work has been done to propose a list that adequately captures where we should end up."

Tommy Rowan
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Changes

According to Research for Action's report on a school closing's effect on major cities:

"A body of research on student mobility indicates that students who change schools often

tend to have higher dropout rates and lower graduation rates. However, this research is limited and less consistent in relationship to closings' impact on mobility in the years after closure. A Chicago Consortium on School Research report notes that displaced students "were more likely to change schools in the future." Alternatively, research on Washington, D.C.'s closings and consolidations did not find evidence that displaced students were more likely to change schools in subsequent years."

In the news

Philly among worst cities to drive a car

Nerdwallet.com rated Philadelphia the 10th worst U.S. city to drive a car.

"The City of Brotherly Love is not ideal for drivers, given the traffic, high population density and lack of available parking," according to the website. "Residents often complain of the unfilled potholes dotting the road, and car theft is common in the city, which leads to high insurance rates."

RICARD LARNA/METRO

▶ Try navigating this mess during rush hour.

The report estimated the annual hours of delay per Philly commuter is 48 hours. The top three ranked are New York, Los Angeles and Chicago.

METRO

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* www.USNews.com, *The College Solution*, 2010

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News in brief

SJ teacher charged with exposing self to child

A South Jersey teacher was charged yesterday with lewdness after he allegedly exposed his genitals to a child at a Cherry Hill Walmart, according to Camden County Prosecutor Warren Faulk and Cherry Hill Police Chief Richard DelCampo. Jules Gross, 48, of Maple Shade, N.J., was also charged with endangering the welfare of a child. The incident happened Friday. He was released yesterday.

Gross is a Spanish teacher at Cherry Hill East High School in Camden County. According to reports, he has been placed on administrative leave. METRO

Trotting. Through Philly

▶ If these two can survive car honks and Jersey drivers while dribbling over the bridge, these two can survive anything.

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

Globetrotters' vanguard for coming games

Brawley "Cheese" Chisholm, a former star at Cherokee High School in Marlton, N.J., and Temple graduate Fatima "TNT" Maddox, carry on a Harlem Globetrotter tradition yesterday by dribbling and spinning basketballs across the Tacony-Palmyra Bridge. Maddox is the ninth female in the Globetrotter's 87-year history. Their arrival is ahead of four games that will be played in the Philadelphia area this weekend. METRO

Most of Philly lives near sex offenders

A study conducted by public records website Recordsferret.com has revealed that 87 percent of Philadelphians live within a half-mile of a registered sex offender.

"We expected between 20 to 30 percent of residents to live near offenders, given the ratio of approximately 781 residents for every one sex offender in Philadelphia," RecordsFerret research and development director David Blair said in an email. "But the saturation across the entire city was surprising, to say the least."

The study, based on a combination of criminal records from 2012 through 2013 and census results, was completed in Philadelphia as a pilot to see how the site's data sources fared in a major urban area. Researchers hope to roll out the study nationwide in weeks.

87%
Of people in Philly live within a half-mile of a registered sex offender

"Sex offenders are a very small part of the population and we expected them to be in low income areas, but it just wasn't the case," Blair said of the Philadelphia findings.

"I think they're more spread out for all sorts of reasons, but it may be that the average Philadelphia sex offender is not the same type of criminal that we're used to."

Alex Wigglesworth
awigglesworth@metro.us

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Cardinals want hint at secret report contents

Catholic cardinals in a closed-door meeting ahead of the election of a new pontiff want to be briefed on a secret report into leaks about alleged corruption and mismanagement in the Vatican, a senior source said yesterday.

More than 140 cardinals began preliminary meetings to sketch a profile for the next pope following the shock abdication of Pope Benedict last month and to ponder who among them might be best to lead a church beset by crises.

The meetings, called "general congregations," are open to cardinals regardless of age, although only those under 80 will later enter a conclave to elect a pope.

"They want to be briefed on the report," said the cardinal, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "But it is a very long report and technically it is secret."

Benedict decided to make the report available only to his successor but one Vatican official said the three elderly cardinals who wrote it could "use their discernment to give any necessary guidance" to fellow cardinals without violating their pact of secrecy. **REUTERS**

FRANCO ORIGLIA/GETTY IMAGES

▶ The Archbishop of New York, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, and the former Archbishop of Philadelphia, Cardinal Justin Rigali, arrive for the start of the Cardinals' Congregations.

"I would imagine ... there will be questioning of cardinals involved in the governing of the curia to see what they think has changed ... anything can come up."

CARDINAL FRANCIS GEORGE

The report

The report was prepared for Benedict, who is now "Pope Emeritus," by three elderly cardinals who investigated the "Vatileaks" scandal last year. The three are attending the meetings but will not enter the conclave.

- Paolo Gabriele, the pope's butler, was convicted of stealing personal papal documents and leaking them to the media.
- The documents alleged corruption and infighting over the running of its bank. Gabriele was jailed and later pardoned by Benedict.

In the news

It's a bird, no, a plane! It's ... a drone

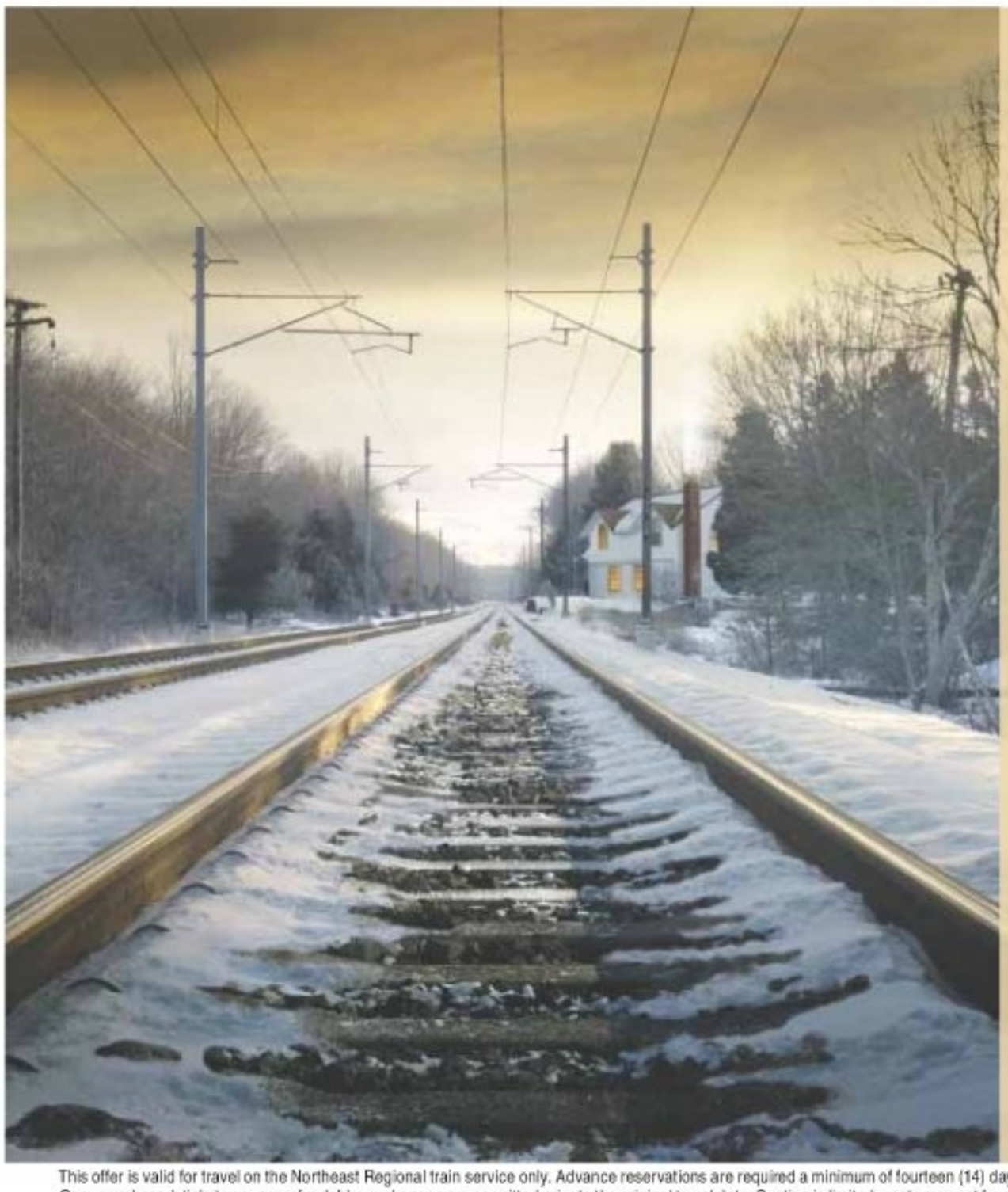
They hover over Hollywood film sets and professional sports events. They track wildfires in Colorado, survey Kansas farm crops and vineyards in California. They inspect miles of industrial pipeline and monitor wildlife, river temperatures and volcanic activity. They also locate marijuana fields, reconstruct crime scenes and spot illegal immigrants breaching U.S. borders. Tens of thousands of domestic drones are zipping through U.S. skies, often flouting tight federal restrictions on drone use that require even the police and the military to get special permits.

Domestic drones are poised for widespread expansion into U.S. airspace once regulation catches up with reality. That is scheduled to begin in late 2015, when the U.S. government starts issuing commercial drone permits.

Veteran aerial photographer Mark Bateson, a consultant to the film and television industry and some police departments, said one reality show producer asked him last year whether his custom-made drone could hover over a desert and use its thermal imaging sensors to spot ghosts for a ghost-hunter reality series. **REUTERS**

▶ Drone technology is already being used for more benign purposes inside the U.S.

MLADEN ANTONOV/AFP/GETTYIMAGES



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Titanic II: The love cruise?

BLUE STAR LINE

▶ Here's one concept of the appearance of the Titanic II.

Forget the 1,500 people who died. The real legacy of the Titanic is romance, according to the man recreating the doomed ship and sailing it along its original route from Southampton, U.K., to New York.

"Across the world the Titanic means something to people — the Romeo and Juliet story that we all long to experience," billionaire businessman Clive Palmer told Metro at London's Ritz hotel, following the unveiling of his plans for Titanic II. "This is for people that want to spend time with their loved ones and experience the last century before Twitter and mobile phones."

The Australian, 58, is serious about delivering an authentic 1912 experience, although extra lifeboats and a series of "disaster simulations" should avoid a repeat of the tragedy. There will be no Internet on the ship, but there will be a full period costume for every passenger and an extravagant smoking room, and tickets will be divided by class. "That's about choice — I will be traveling in third class so I can meet real people," says Palmer, echoing Rose, the heroine from James Cameron's movie about the famous ship.

Yet this is a business decision. The idea for Titanic II emerged from a meeting with Chinese shipping magnates hoping to crack the cruise industry, and Palmer offered them a glamorous way in. His Blue Star Line company has received 40,000 ticket requests, including 16 million-dollar offers, enough to sustain several years of journeys and the building of more Titanics.

▶ An artist's rendering shows the potential Cafe Parisien.

Quoted

"This is for people that want to spend time with their loved ones and experience the last century before Twitter and mobile phones." PALMER

40K
Star Line company has received 40,000 ticket requests.

2016
Titanic II is set to sail in 2016.

Palmer dismisses "negative" suggestions he is cashing in on tragedy, but aspects of his plans are worrying historic and charitable groups, such as the decision not to include any memorial to the dead.

"There is no problem if the project respects good taste and pays tribute to those who were lost — but I think this is slight exploitation," Howard Nelson, founder of the Titanic Heritage Trust, told Metro. "The survivors' families have mixed feelings, and they should be considered."

Regardless, the wheels are turning already, and the Titanic is set to sail again in 2016.

Kieron Monks
METRO WORLD NEWS

Obama renews offer on safety nets cuts

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Reforming Social Security might be on the table.

President Barack Obama raised anew the issue of cutting entitlements such as Medicare and Social Security as a way out of damaging budget cuts, a White House official said on Sunday, as both sides tried to limit a fiscal crisis.

Signaling he might be ready to explore a compromise to end automatic spending cuts that began late Friday, Obama mentioned reforming these entitlement programs in calls with lawmakers from both parties on Saturday afternoon.

"He's reaching out to Democrats who understand we have to make serious progress on long-term entitlement reform and Republicans who realize that if we had that type of entitlement reform, they'd be willing to have tax reform that raises revenues to lower the deficit," White House senior economic official Gene Sperling said on Sunday on the CNN program "State of the Union." Republicans have argued that the only way to tame budget deficits over the long haul is by slowing the cost of sprawling social safety net programs.

These include the Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid programs for the elderly, disabled and poor that are becoming more expensive as a large segment of the U.S. population hits retirement age. **REUTERS**

Problems may come soon

$85 billion in indiscriminate spending cuts kicked in after both parties failed to agree on how to stop them.

The Democrats predict the automatic cuts could soon cause air-traffic delays, meat shortages as food safety inspections slow down, and hundreds of thousands of furloughs for federal workers.

750K

Economists have warned that such heavy cuts over such a short period will slow growth and potentially cost 750,000 jobs.

GETTY IMAGES

In the news

Biden: Obama is 'not bluffing' on stopping Iran's nuke drive

WASHINGTON. Vice President Joe Biden told America's biggest pro-Israel lobbying organization yesterday that President Barack Obama is "not bluffing" about the United States' determination to stop Iran from getting a nuclear weapon.

"The president of the United States cannot and does not bluff. President Barack Obama is not bluffing," he told the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in a speech to its annual policy conference.

▶ The Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant in Iran hosts this reactor building.

Quoted

"We're not looking for war. We're ready to negotiate peacefully. But all options including military force are on the table." BIDEN

"While that window is closing, we believe there is still time and space [for diplomacy]," he added.

The United States and many of its allies suspect Iran may be using its civil nuclear program as a cover to develop atomic weapons, a possibility that Israel, which is regarded as the Middle East's only nuclear power, sees as a mortal threat. **REUTERS**

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For this reason, Drexel's Continuing Professional Education announces **Reintegrating Women Veterans Into the Workforce**, career development workshops focused on transferring acquired skills during military service to civilian employment.

This program of five workshops is completely free to women veterans.

Classes start in March. For a complete schedule and to register, please visit goodwin.drexel.edu/careers.

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3 Ways students can build experience in arts and media

- Build your portfolio and break into the competitive fields
- Show that you take initiative and have a can-do attitude

Finding an internship in the competitive field of the arts or media can be tough, but there are things you can do that will show employers you're not just the type to sit around and wait.

Students in fields such as media, architecture or visual arts should be working toward a portfolio in every class. Whether it is online or in a big black folder, you should build a work sample that showcases your abilities and talents.

Here's how to get started on your portfolio:

Blog

Start your own professional blog on a free site and start to build your brand. Make sure to keep your blog interesting and relevant, and stay up-to-date on the industry you hope to work for. Be careful about blogging about sensitive issues, such religion and politics, as you don't want to end up offend a future employer.

Show that you're tech-savvy and versatile by sharing videos, pictures, tweets, links, GIFs and other forms of media to express yourself.

Break out the camera

If you love photography, invest in or borrow a quality camera and embark on the endless possibilities to discover the types of digital media you can create. Perhaps you will find your passion in wildlife photography, nature photography, microphotography or even fashion. Snap pics at events on your campus to get used to shooting strangers. Want to practice portraits? Network with people you know and cart a camera to the next wedding, family reunion or social event you attend — you'll build your skills and broaden that portfolio so you can show employers you took initiative.

SHAHEERAH KAYANI FOR TalentEgg
hatching graduate careers

Talentegg.com is a job board and online career resource for college students and recent graduates.

▶ Don't hesitate — grab your camera and get out there if you want to start building your portfolio. Not only will these do-it-yourself projects help you gain experience in your field, but they will also help to enlarge your professional network and can provide a source of extra cash if you decide you're good enough to charge for your work.

BRAND X

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Most colleges have a campus newspaper, so find out how you can become a contributor. You can test your skills and find out what really interests you by writing articles, opinion pieces, advice columns and sports columns — or even creating cartoon strips. And don't forget: The media is watching, so make sure whatever you write is something that will tell a future employer who you are and what is your passion.

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Young men, minorities worse off in hunt for college degrees: Study

Wide racial and gender gaps persist among young Americans when it comes to earning a college degree and getting a job, according to fresh data from a 14-year government survey released on Friday.

The study of about 9,000 25-year-olds found 30 percent of such young women in the United States had earned a bachelor's degree compared to 22 percent of men.

Those women who had at least a bachelor's degree were more likely to be employed than similarly educated men and spend less time out of work, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics said.

▶ Racial gaps persist in education.

Sociology professor Thomas DiPrete, co-director of Columbia University's Center for the Study of Wealth and Inequality, said the data highlights a worrying gender gap when it comes to college education, with men slipping behind.

At age 25, blacks and Hispanics were twice as likely as whites to be high school dropouts, while whites were more than twice as likely to have earned a bachelor's degree, the survey showed.

While 30 percent of whites had graduated from college by their mid-20's, only 14 percent of blacks and 12 percent of Hispanics had done so, it found. **REUTERS**

How a college degree helps financially

A Pew Charitable Trusts study released last month found that the rocky economy hit many youth hard but college graduates saw their employment stabilize more quickly. "Having a college degree buffered those young adults in the labor market," said Diana Elliott, a researcher at the Pew's Charitable Trusts' Economic Mobility Project.

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myentertainment

THE WORD

Dorothy Robinson's take on the world of gossip @dorothyatmetro dorothy.robinson@metro.us

Jaden Smith's new squeeze

In today's "Lifestyles of The Rich and Famous: The Prepubescent Set" it looks like **Jaden Smith**, 14, and **Kylie Jenner**, 15, are going steady. Smith, who was in London recently for **Justin Bieber**'s 19th birthday party (more on that later), took Jenner to Caffe Nero in London's Piccadilly Square on Sunday. "They're dating," says a source close to Jenner. "It's new, but they've been friends forever."

So welcome to your future: We're going to be reading about who these two are dating for the next 30 years — starting now. Horrifying, isn't it?

Smith Jenner

GETTY IMAGES

More on Bieber's 'worst' birthday

Justin Bieber is backtracking that his birthday was "the worst" — as he said on Twitter — because his friends were barred entry to the club where he was celebrating because they were underage. "I love how the club wanted to give the press another reason to why we didn't stay at their weak-ass club so they wouldn't look bad for me walking in and right back out," he wrote on Instagram. "I said 'worst birthday,' but that was due to dummies pushing over my fans," he writes.

Hot. Shot

JAMES DEVANEY/WIREIMAGE

Courtside canoodling with Mary-Kate

Every time I see Mary-Kate Olsen, 26, making out with her 43-year-old boyfriend, French financier Olivier Sarkozy, I think: "Why is there an Olsen kissing Tom Hanks?" Here, the couple was up for some courtside PDA at Madison Square Garden during the Miami Heat vs. New York Knicks game on Sunday.

The feed ...

Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

Today, Elizabeth Banks is trying to help, David Copperfield is having a rough flight, Elizabeth Hurley is cleaning up messes and Steven Soderbergh doesn't get the hype.

@ElizabethBanks
Do you have a bad relationship w tequila? Maybe you just haven't met the right one...

@D_Copperfield
Everyone is ok. Emergency landing in Peoria, Illinois. So scary.

@ElizabethHurley
I adore my puppy Mia but she is proving to be VERY DIFFICULT to house train. anyone else been challenged by cocker spaniels?!

@Bitchuation
why do people want an oscar so much? i take mine out and look at it five or six times a day and i feel nothing.

Elizabeth Banks

Talking points

Sheen is helping Lindsay Lohan

Charlie Sheen is continuing his quest to help Lindsay Lohan in her time of need, this time offering up his services as a mentor for the troubled starlet. "I have a kinship with somebody who clearly needs a mentor, whether she wants one or not," Sheen tells TMZ. "She can continue to hang out with her dress-shredding club buddies or turn to me for some advice from a guy who's been down the road as well as every other side trail on the journey."

Sheen

Affleck

Affleck kicks at photographer

Ben Affleck is used to a certain amount of paparazzi attention, but sometimes enough is enough — like late last week when some photographers got too close for comfort around Affleck and his 4-year-old daughter, Seraphina. The paparazzi reportedly swarmed the father and daughter outside of her school, according to Us Weekly. "She was asking for them to stop," a source says, adding that Affleck asked them numerous times to back off. "The paps said they needed to be 'that close.'"

Adele is basking in that Hollywood glow

Clearly receiving an Oscar statue for "Skyfall" gave Adele some ideas. Back home in London after last week's Academy Awards, the singer posted a photo to Twitter of her Best Song Oscar alongside a smaller replica award that read "Best Son," a souvenir she picked up for her baby boy, born in October. "Thanks for having us, Hollywood," she wrote along with the photo.

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Chin up, Liz!

1: Queen Elizabeth was discharged from a London hospital yesterday after a bout with a stomach bug.

2: It may be the floppy hair, the chisled chin, those smarty-pants glasses, or some combination of all three — we just can't get enough of **Patrick Dempsey** at the photocall for "Silhouette" Monday in Milan.

3: Even when just out and about in London, **Rihanna** still manages to look fierce. The singer was snapped on Monday.

4: Harvey Fierstein gave a smooch to **Cyndi Lauper** at the opening of "Kinky Boots" on Broadway Sunday in NYC.

5: You can thank this woman for introducing us to "Twilight": **Stephanie Meyer** attended a photocall for her next project, "The Host," in Madrid on Monday.

6. Crooning cutie **Miguel** performed in **Johannesburg, South Africa, on Saturday.**

1 NEIL MOCKFORD/FILMMAGIC
2 VITTORIO ZUNINO CELOTTO/GETTY
3 NEIL MOCKFORD/FILMMAGIC
4 J. COUNTESS/GETTY
5 CARLOS ALVAREZ/GETTY
6 SIMON MATHEBULA/SUNDAY TIMES/GALLO IMAGES

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Microsoft Software Tuesday, March 26 • 1:00-2:30pm	**Intro to Computers** Monday, April 1 • 1:00-2:30pm

It's time to raise a glass

It's National Absinthe Day! And we bet you didn't even know that was a thing. The holiday has been celebrated since 2007, when versions of the infamous spirit became legal in the U.S. after a long ban.

Cocktail recipe:

Pan's Elemental

In its honor, mixologist Heather Rodkey at Rex 1516 is introducing a new absinthe cocktail, the Pan's Elemental. Here's how to enjoy van Gogh's favorite elixir (just try not to cut off an ear).

- 2 oz. Rhum Barbancourt
- 1 oz. fresh lime juice
- .5 oz. Cardamaro
- .25 oz. Vieux Carre Absinthe Superieure

Method: Shake and strain into a chilled coupe. Garnish with a lime twist.

Where to drink it:
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▶ Pan's Elemental

REX 1516

Prefer a more authentic absinthe experience?

Rodkey explains how to keep it classic.

You'll need:
- Proper glassware (an absinthe glass is similar to a sundae glass, but made out of finer crystal)
- Slotted spoon
- Sugar cube
- Carafe of chilled water
- Absinthe

The process:
1. Pour 1.5 oz. of absinthe into your glass.
2. Rest the spoon on the glass and place the sugar cube on it.
3. Pour a steady, fine stream of chilled water over the sugar cube, dissolving as much as possible into your glass of absinthe (about 4-5 oz. of water).
4. Stir in the remainder of the sugar cube.
5. Bottoms up!

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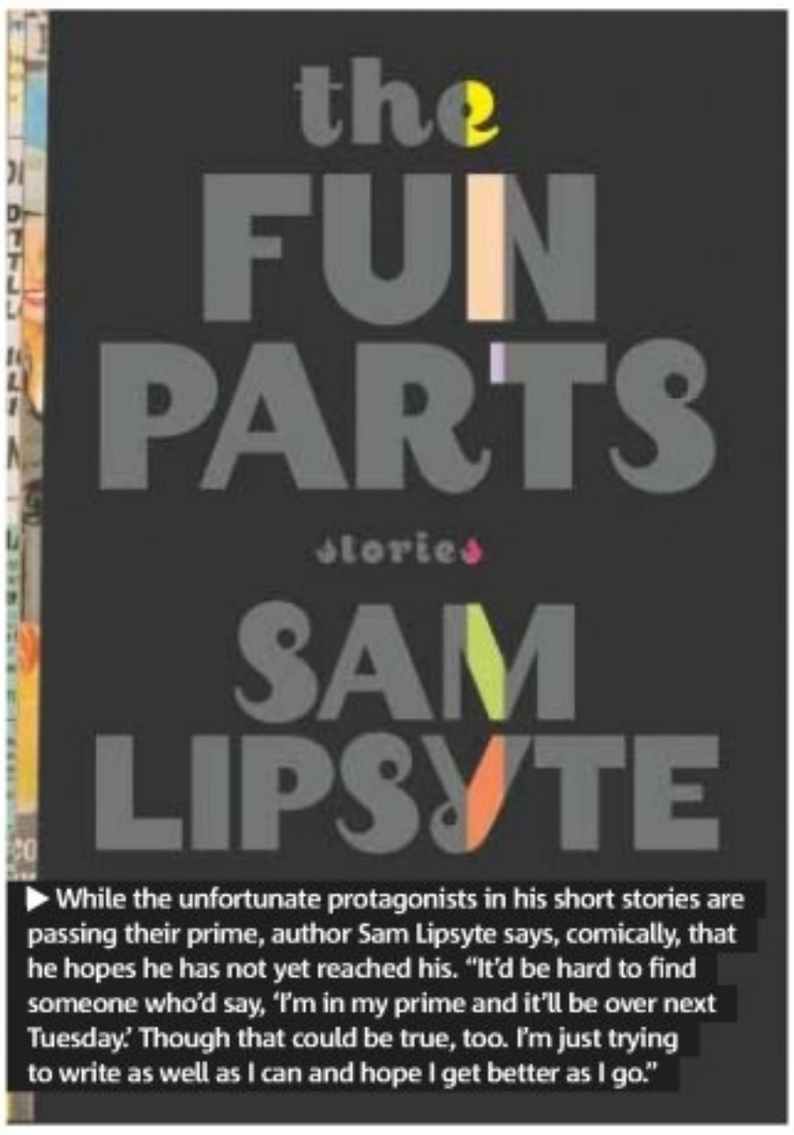
Life, as it really is

The old saying 'comedy is tragedy plus time' rings true in Sam Lipsyte's hilarious new short story collection 'The Fun Parts'



While the unfortunate protagonists in his short stories are passing their prime, author Sam Lipsyte says, comically, that he hopes he has not yet reached his. "It'd be hard to find someone who'd say, 'I'm in my prime and it'll be over next Tuesday.' Though that could be true, too. I'm just trying to write as well as I can and hope I get better as I go."

To the chagrin of your peers, have you ever cracked up at the most malapropos moments: grim, vulgar or absurd? Like the loathsome, self-loathing and yet somehow lovable characters in his short story collection "The Fun Parts," Sam Lipsyte gives his readers, too, the license to shamelessly laugh through tears and cry through laughter. We ask the author about his 13 not-so-fun, but oh-so-funny tales of redemption.

What is it about your contemptible protagonists — addicts, poseurs, cast-offs and outcasts — that makes them so engaging, even likable?

When you get the right kind of language going with these characters, especially when they're narrating, they're able to get across a sense of life as it really feels. Even if it's not a pretty picture, it's filled with a raw humor and openness. We recognize aspects of ourselves in them. I strive for intimacy. I don't want to mock [my characters]; they mock themselves. And whenever they interact with the world, they tend to lose, but that doesn't make them losers.

Many of your protagonists blame their problems, without resentment, on flawed parenting. What do you think we inherit from our parents?

I have kids myself, so I'm thinking about these things. The scariest thing is that my own parents have no idea which moments made a difference because they were usually so banal. You would never remember doing them in your own lifetime but your child is studying you and freezes them forever. I hope that with my children I'm saying the right thing when they're taking the picture.

It seems that we meet each character at the beginning of the end of a major crisis.

I'm always interested in characters that have their backs into the corner as we begin; it adds more tension. We end up getting the backstory anyway to some degree, right? You have to design a machine that will feed information in a way that seems part of the thrill. An old teacher of mine once said, "There's no getting to the good parts."

Or "the fun parts."

[Laughs] Right.

Q&A

How do you find humor in life's unsung tragedies?

I view everything in a tragic-comic light. Most things [in life] are dead serious and quite funny at the same time. Something can be really funny and then suddenly, as you're laughing so hard, you begin to see how painful everything is or it shows you some flash of the abyss. We are always seeing things from different angles. I think having just one [way of seeing] is a problem.

CERIDWEN MORRIS

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mystyle

Paris Fashion Week

Paris Fashion Week trends

The statement sleeve

Sleeves are getting more elaborate as the Paris shows go on. At **Maison Martin Margiela**, oversized shirt sleeves came with giant brush strokes on even bigger cuffs. Phoebe Philo, meanwhile, twisted the sleeves of a coat dress to make a big bow at **Celine**, and Rei Kawakubo wound hers into giant serpentine coils at **Comme des Garcons**.

FRIDAY

8:30 p.m.

Outside the **Yohji Yamamoto** show, skater boys are shredding in the biggest bowl I've ever seen. But inside, a different picture of street youth is unfolding. As I watch Yamamoto's dizzying array of mini-collections walk down the runway, I wonder if this is what it feels like to people-watch in Tokyo. The gothic Lolitas in intricately cut origami dresses, the arty hipsters in voluminous asymmetrical black coats and separates, the romantics in their softly twisted and tied pale blue frocks — each group is completely different, and yet they are all linked by Yamamoto's jaw-dropping workmanship.

SATURDAY

4:45 p.m.

I knew that Joan Smalls would be taking a break from most of the runway season, but I didn't know that just about all of the other black models would be taking a break right along with her. The autumn/winter '13 shows are the whitest I've seen in a few years. The homogeneity on the catwalk is especially disappointing after several seasons in which diversity on the runway was experiencing an upswing. I especially appreciate **Vivienne Westwood**'s multicultural lineup of models, which is doing a much better job at reflecting the world that exists outside the bubble of Paris Fashion Week than any of the other shows I've seen so far. As far as the clothes, she's mixed in a lot of Westwoodisms — the obligatory environmental theme (this go 'round it's "Save the Arctic"), distinctly British references (medieval England meets the Scottish Highlands) — with her familiar silhouettes (the slashed, drapey

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'13 diary

dresses and voluminous frocks, for instance). She's not breaking new ground here, but I'm betting her loyalists won't mind.

SUNDAY

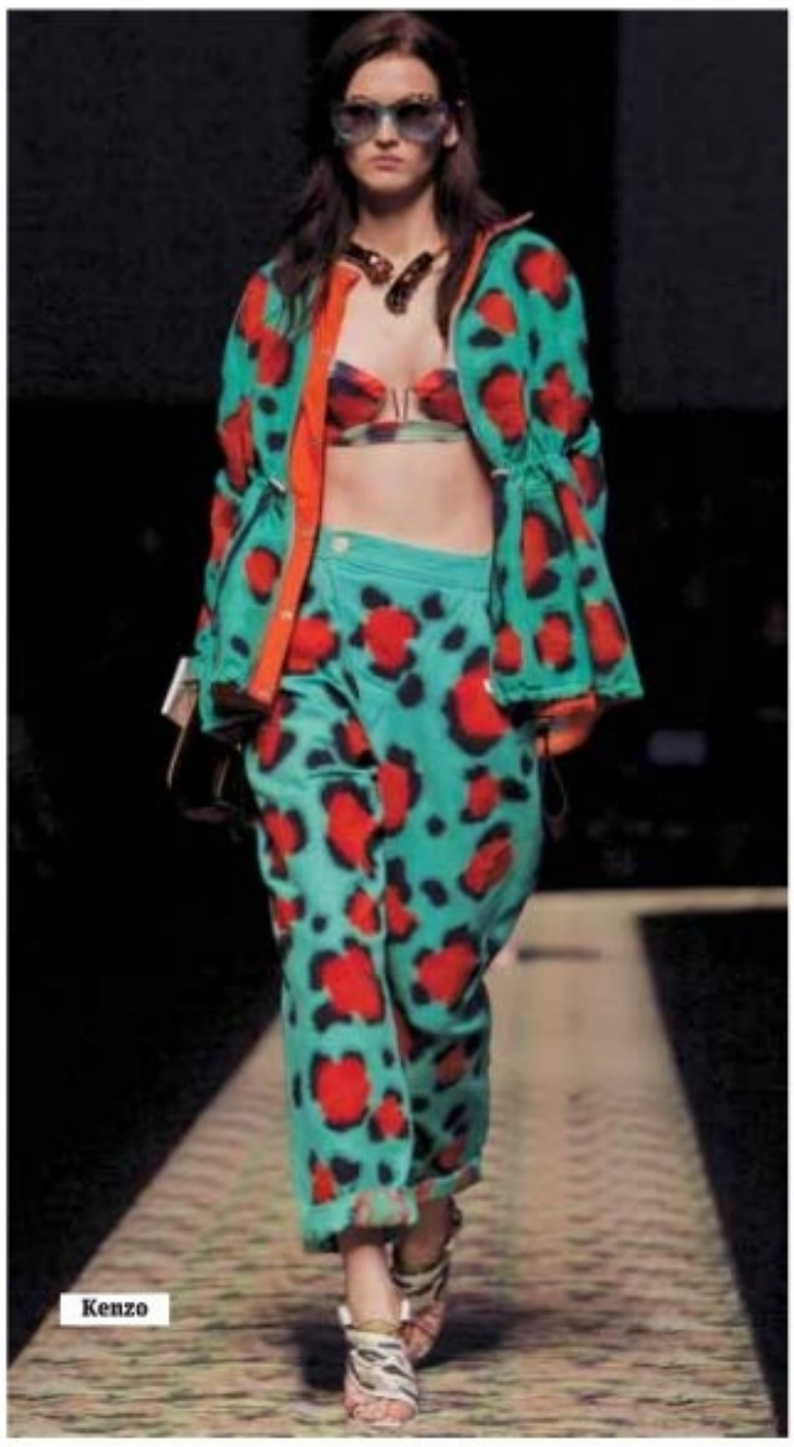
10 a.m.

Team **Kenzo** has left quilted throws and little hand-warmers for each of us on our seats. The venue isn't heated, so this is a good thing. It's also a testament to how cool Humberto Leon and Carol Lim are that everyone in the audience is wearing their freebies. Celebrities, editors, stylists and buyers rarely indulge in the swag gifted at shows because they receive enough in their regular working life, plus no one wants to be that girl dragging a gift bag from show to show.

10:20 a.m.

The press notes explain that Leon and Lim went to ancient temples in India, Nepal and China to find inspiration for their new collection. That trip yielded a new batch of graphic separates worth coveting. For the past two or three seasons, we've been experiencing a moment in which the statement print is a thing. The graphic is coveted as much as the item of clothing or accessory itself. Designers such as Miuccia Prada started this phenomenon years ago (remember when you just had to have that lipstick print?), but Kenzo is taking it up a notch. The new collection is teeming with pieces that are destined for ubiquity next season and I can guess which ones will be the next street style stars: A shearling leather bomber and matching skirt covered in all-seeing eyes, a boxy coat done in shimmery lurex and a blazer covered in swirly embroidery are high on the list.

Kenya Hunt
METRO WORLD NEWS



Kenzo

Spotted front row

Stars give it up for Givenchy

Clockwise from right: **Kim Kardashian and Kanye West**; **Sky Ferreira, Frank Ocean, Carine Roitfeld** and **Ciara**; **Amanda Seyfried and Jessica Chastain**.

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Radha Mitchell is seeing 'Red'

The Australian film star is making the now-common leap to TV with ABC's 'Red Widow'
The lie she told to make it in Hollywood

Radha Mitchell comes to television with "Red Widow," playing a woman forced to pick up her husband's criminal activities after he's killed. It's juicy stuff, to be sure, and just what the Australian actress — known for film roles in "Silent Hill," "Finding Neverland" and "Man on Fire" — had been looking for. "Marta Walraven is pretty much my dream character to play," Mitchell says. "Basically, she's a woman who has been avoiding her criminal upbringing by living the life of a soccer mom and is suddenly dragged into a world that she's been trying to avoid her whole life. And in the process she discovers things about herself and talents that she didn't know she had."

Change of pace

Mitchell isn't actually done with films.

"Oh, I have a few films that are getting released soon," she says, including "Olympus Has Fallen," out later this month. "But honestly, it was a little bit of a shock at first because I had never worked at that pace [of a TV show]. I've normally had a little bit of time to sort of marinate and sort of sit with a script and imagine. Whereas with this, you get the script and then next thing you know you're shooting it."

Mitchell says she relates quite a bit to her character, though she's wary of getting into specifics. "Well, I guess the parts that I relate to I probably wouldn't really want to share," she says with a laugh. "But in terms of being thrown into a situation, I think even just coming to America when I did initially was a very exciting adventure and was at times intimidating and scary. I was, like, 23 or something. I didn't know anybody, and I was staying on my manager's couch. But it was probably one of the most exciting junctures in my life because it was all about what could happen."

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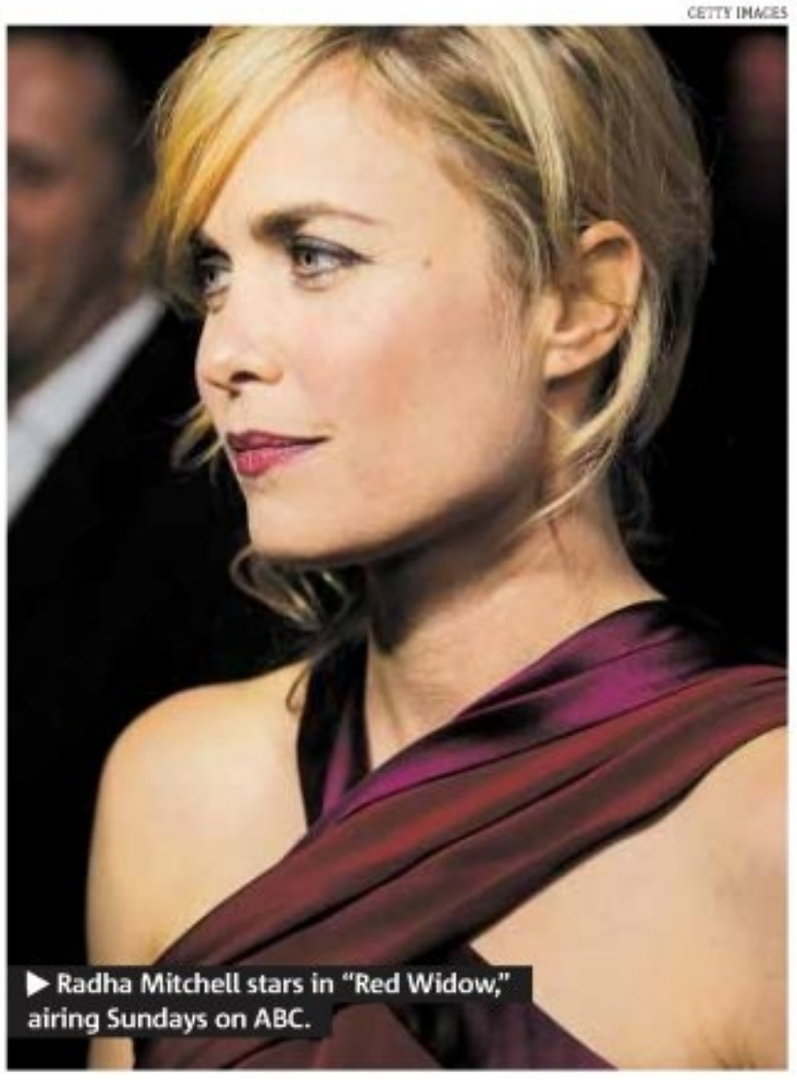

▶ Radha Mitchell stars in "Red Widow," airing Sundays on ABC.

So with the move to television — something very common for film actors these days — does that mean Mitchell's not looking for movies right now? "I'm over films," she jokes. "I was actually at this point in my life. And also, I feel like exciting characters are on television right now. ... I read this pilot and I was like, wow, that's the role I've always wanted to play."

The little white lie

After finding success in Australia, Radha Mitchell came to Hollywood, and quickly learned that sometimes you have to be willing to bend the truth a bit to get a gig.

"It took me six months, and then I got a film called 'High Art,'" she says. There was only one problem, though: While she was giving Los Angeles a shot, the film was actually getting set up in New York. "They needed to cast the movie out of New York, and I was, like, 'Yeah, I'm from New York,'" she remembers. "I sent some video out there. So they cast me, and then I didn't have anywhere to live." Luckily writer-director Lisa Cholodenko was able to help her out in a bind. "At the time I was, like, staying on the director's couch," Mitchell says.

Ned Ehrbar
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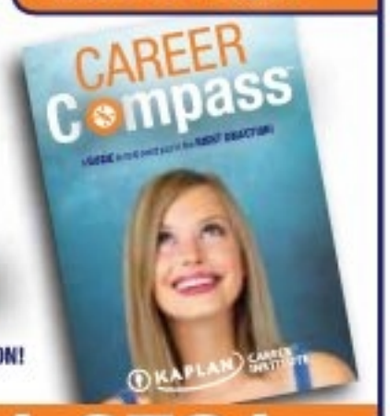

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TV watch list

'The Greatest'

SPECIAL. This addictive VH1 series, which features countdowns spotlighting music's best players, takes a peek at the 100 sexiest artists of all time. The first of five parts airs tonight. We're keeping our fingers crossed that a bald Britney Spears at least cracks the Top 10. **9 p.m., VH1**

'White Collar'

DRAMA. Season 4 culminates in a showdown at the Empire State Building. We're going to guess this use of the Manhattan skyscraper is a bit more "King Kong" than "Sleepless in Seattle." **Season finale, 10 p.m., USA**

'Smash'

DRAMA. If you aren't already watching this iffy series, Sean Hayes' guest stint probably won't be enough to entice you. But if you're a longtime "Will & Grace" fan, at least you know that two of its cast members (Hayes and Debra Messing) are reuniting at last, even if they don't share any scenes. **10 p.m., NBC**

GETTY IMAGES/NBCUNIVERSAL

▶ The always funny Sean Hayes begins his guest-starring gig on "Smash" tonight.

'The Daily Show with Jon Stewart'

TALK SHOW. Sandra Day O'Connor, the first female justice appointed to the Supreme Court, swings by to chat with Jon Stewart about her new book. Forbes calls O'Connor one of the most powerful women alive, so we'll take a dose of the 82-year-old vanguard anywhere we can get it. **11 p.m., Comedy Central** ● MATTHEW JACOBS

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Nick Lachey releases new lullaby album

Singer Nick Lachey, a member of U.S. group 98 Degrees, has swapped his boy-band heartthrob status to embrace fatherhood in a new album of lullabies dedicated to his baby son.

On the cover of "A Father's Lullaby," Lachey, 39, is pictured cuddling his son Camden, who was born in September 2012.

"When I first learned that I was going to be a father, I was inspired to create a special tribute to my son," Lachey said in a statement.

"Creating this album allowed me to further connect with Camden while also sharing the experience with families who are on a similar journey of welcoming a new life into their world," he added.

The 12-track album, released in partnership with toy brand Fisher-Price, includes four original songs by the singer, such as title track "Father's Lullaby" and "Sleepy Eyes."

GETTY

"A Father's Lullaby" will be available to download on iTunes and Amazon starting March 13, and in stores in April.

Camden is the first child for Lachey and wife Vanessa, who married in July 2011. Lachey was previously married to singer Jessica Simpson from 2002 until their divorce in 2005. **REUTERS**

Lachey who?

Lachey rose to fame in the 1990s with his brother Drew and members Justin Jeffre and Jeff Timmons in boy band 98 Degrees, who were known for top-40 pop-chart hits like "True to Your Heart" and "Thank God I Found You." Lachey, who recorded two solo albums during the band's hiatus, reunited with his bandmates last year and 98 Degrees announced a new album and tour. Their upcoming fourth studio record "2.0" is set to be released in May. The band will be joining fellow 1990s boy bands New Kids on the Block and Boyz II Men on a North American summer tour.

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Hot products

4 Great new baby items

1 Gracco's FastAction Fold Jogger Click Connect: Move over Baby Jogger, there's a new jogging stroller on the sidewalk. Graco is entering into the lucrative jogging stroller market with their new mouthful, the FastAction Fold Jogger Click Connect. It promises a "one-second, single-step fold" in the lightweight, all-terrain jogger. Highlights include an extra-large storage basket, trays, a smartphone cradle and reflectors.

1 Gracco's FastAction Fold Jogger Click Connect, from $179.99

2 Maclaren BMW Buggy: The Maclaren BMW Buggy is for the discriminating baby (or, really, their German engineering-loving parents). Suitable for babies from 6 months on, the limited-edition stroller has a multiple-position seat recline, a custom BMW insignia buckle and a BMW interior-inspired removable seat liner, as well as rear reflectors and "BMW-inspired" wheels to make the stroller feel "automotive." Vroom!

2 Maclaren BMW Buggy, $385

3 babyGap's Peter Rabbit collection, $6.99 to $55

3 babyGap's Peter Rabbit collection: In celebration of Peter Rabbit's 110th anniversary, babyGap's adorable new collection features an assortment of soft, knit bodysuits, colored denim, one-pieces and patterned dresses. Perfect for newborn through 24 months.

DOROTHY ROBINSON

4 Stride Rite Crib + Crawl: Crawling babies need all the help they can get. This new line of shoe by parental favorite Stride Rite strikes a great balance: They are soft and easy to slide on (a plus) but they add just enough stability to help protect your baby's new, on-the-go feet.

Stride Rite Crib + Crawl, $20-$30

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myparenting

In the news

Childhood ADHD may lead to troubles later on: Study

Nearly a third of people diagnosed as children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder still have the condition in adulthood, according to a new study that also found they're more likely to develop other disorders and to commit suicide.

U.S. researchers who published their findings in Pediatrics yesterday found that about 29 percent of participants in the study who were diagnosed with ADHD as children ended up carrying that diagnosis into their late 20s.

The researchers found that 57 percent of childhood ADHD patients had at least one condition as adults — alcohol or substance abuse, anxiety and depression — compared to 35 percent of the people in a comparison group.

People diagnosed with ADHD as children were also more likely to commit suicide. The researchers found that 3 of the 367 participants with childhood ADHD had committed suicide, compared to just 7 of 4,946 non-ADHD participants. **REUTERS**

HUNTSTOCK

▶ Most childhood ADHD continues into adulthood.

Neon nurseries are in

Gone are the days of the traditional pink and blue color scheme for baby rooms. "In 2012, there was a lot of neon in fashion," Mauer says. "You saw it on the runway, and now people are bringing it into their nurseries." Big and bold is the new motto. But don't expect to paint the walls electric blue or buy a bright yellow crib, notes Mauer. You are more likely to see neon pink bedding, or a neon green table cover that adds mild pops of color and a bit of trendiness to the nursery — without going overboard.

Pregnancy trends for 2013

▶ Whether it's taking a mommy-moon or hosting an ultrasound party, the big arrival is a big deal ▶ What you'll be seeing this year

Fear not, moms-to-be: Being pregnant doesn't mean you have to give up on the trends. We caught up with Elena Mauer, deputy editor of Thebump.com, to learn what first-time moms should look out for in the coming year.

Going green ... with baby names

Pantone named emerald as the color of the year for 2013, so expect to see baby names like Hunter, Jade, Kelly and Forest increasing in popularity in the coming months. Even celebrities have been swept up in the trend (Drew Barrymore named her new baby girl Olive). "It's neat that green and these other natural shades are inspiring baby names," says Mauer.

Ultrasound parties

Parents-to-be are going beyond the usual baby shower or gender reveal party, which is when "you would cut a cake and the icing in the middle was either pink or blue, and that told you the baby's gender," Mauer says. Now more extravagant measures are popping up, including ultrasound parties, where a medically trained technician is invited to perform the procedure in the living room for all of your loved ones to see. Beware: This kind of celebration isn't for everyone, as ultrasound parties can get expensive, so plan accordingly. Simpler (yet still dramatic) measures include sending boxes stuffed with pink or blue balloons to family members.

Mommy-moons

Move over, baby-moons. Soon-to-be moms are taking what Thebump.com calls "mommy-moons," mini getaways that pregnant women can take with their girlfriends (and not their husbands) before the arrival of the baby. Beach vacations, spa trips and pampering parties with manicures and pedicures are the most popular choices for women who want one final trip with their friends before their lives change forever. "Pregnant women are looking for ways to pamper themselves [and] spend time with their friends before the baby arrives and they become very busy," says Mauer.

Bria Mariette
letters@metro.us

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Kate Middleton's pregnancy is changing your nursery — and your maternity wear.

Royal baby gear

The whole world has been anticipating the arrival of Kate Middleton and Prince William's baby. Designers have already begun incorporating Middleton's style into some of their maternity wear collections, so pregnant women can emulate royal fashion. "We think the royal baby is going to be a trendsetter and he or she isn't even alive yet," says Mauer. It's only a matter of time before we see the royal baby's style replicated in department stores.

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mydivorce

How to recover financially from a divorce

You must do everything possible to protect your financial future after a split According to Brendan Lyle of divorce finance company BBL Churchill, taking a few wise steps can substantially lessen the potential for monetary damage

Making the divorce process easier can help reduce stress and ease the pain of a challenging transition.

THINKSTOCK IMAGES

Divorce can be a trying experience both emotionally and financially. According to Brendan Lyle of divorce finance company BBL Churchill, taking a few wise steps can substantially lessen the potential for monetary damage after a couple decides to dissolve its marriage.

Understand your assets and liabilities

"Take an inventory of what you owe and what you own. This includes mortgages, loans, stocks and other investments or accounts. So many people rely on their spouse to pay things like mortgage on the house, and so they have no idea what their financial situation is. It is imperative that people take this step before legal counsel is even consulted," Lyle says, noting that finding these things out after a divorce lawyer is involved takes time and money. "Knowing this information makes everyone's lives a lot easier. This is also an important time to preserve or improve your credit. You will potentially spend the rest of your life securing loans without the assistance of your partner, so that is something to consider in the early stages of a divorce or separation," he notes.

Get professional financial advice

Advisors can help clients determine whether it is wiser to sell things such as the shared home immediately and split the proceeds for investments, or if it is better to wait and sell major assets later. "They are able to make these projections about your financial situation five years down the line, and help you determine what course of action best fits your needs," he says. "There are specialized divorce financial planners who do just that. You need to realize your spouse's future earning potential, as well as your own."

Secure records and passwords

This includes insurance information, birth certificates, passports and credit card info. "Being as well informed as possible can also help control the cost of a forensic accountant, which can be one of the most expensive aspects of a divorce," he says.

Know that resources are available in the interim

Lyle notes that his firm, BBL Churchill, issues divorce financing loans to pay for divorce litigation and living expenses based on projected awards. These loans generally constitute 25 percent of overall estimated awards. This money can help a client secure the best legal counsel and maximize alimony and child support, as well as cover their costs of living in the time before the judge's decision is finalized.

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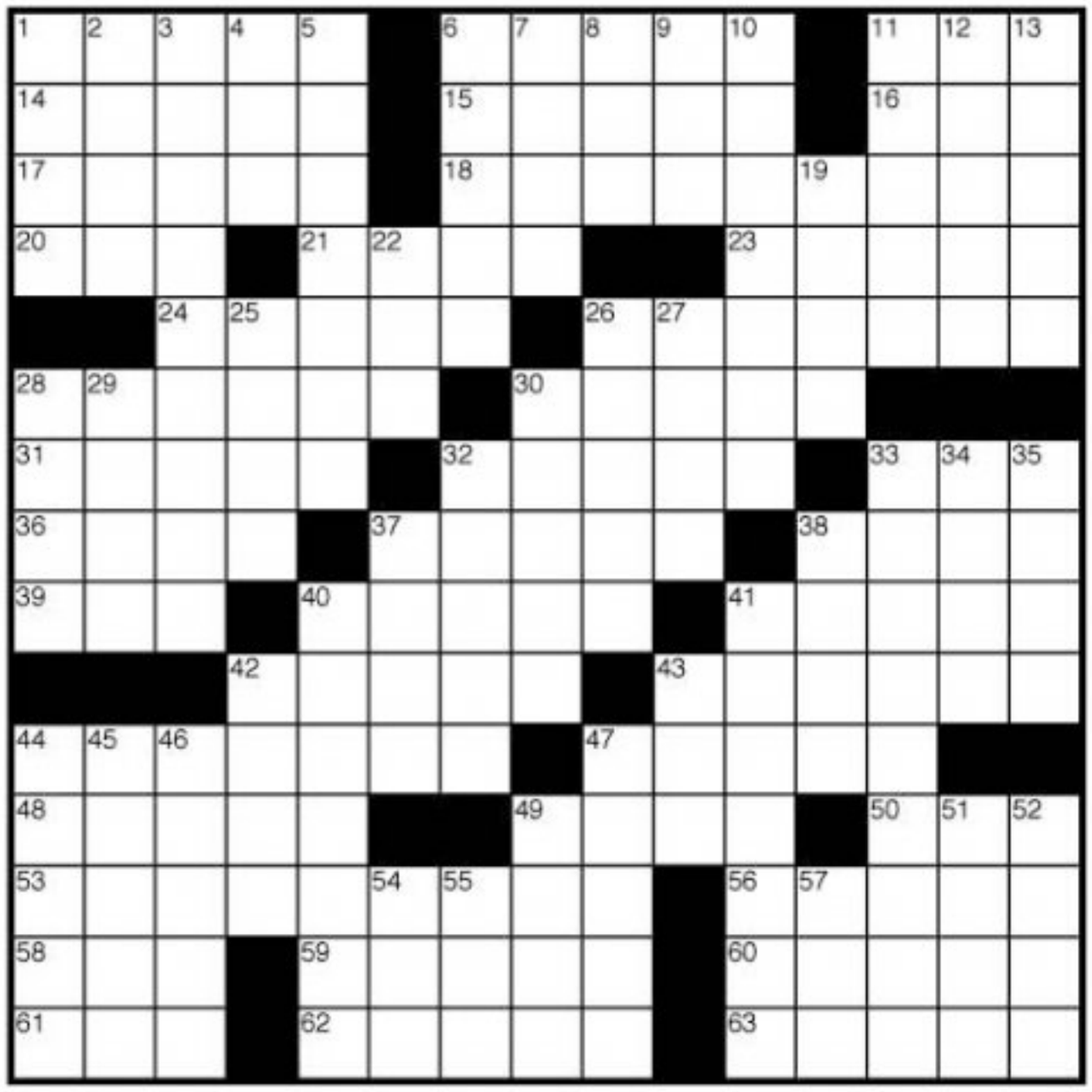

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13 Aleut carving
19 "Macbeth" trio
22 — Tzu ("Tao Te Ching" author)
25 Comics pooch
26 Blanches
27 Small brook
28 Wade through
29 Spelling error
30 Walleyed fishes
32 Puts an edge on
33 Soil protector (2 wds.)
34 Banister
35 Uno, dos, —
37 Type of lock
38 Grabbed a taxi
40 Tropical beat
41 "Daydream Believer" group
42 Istanbul native
43 Hither and —
44 Kind of toast
45 In plain view
46 "The Wreck of the Mary —"
47 Presents
49 Baez or Rivers
51 Quick snack
52 Crystal-gazer
54 Tach reading
55 Blast-furnace input
57 Outback bird

Horoscope

♓ Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** Nothing worth bragging about is likely to be accomplished if you are too wishy-washy. In fact, your inability to make up your mind could drive everyone crazy.

♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** Don't get so carried away by how well others are doing that you forget to concentrate on furthering your own abilities. Focus on your own efforts.

♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** Just because a certain tactic works well for a friend doesn't necessarily mean that it will for you. Experiment to find your own game plan and then stick to it.

♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** Steer clear of any involvement in which you have no say in the decision-making. Plans made entirely by others might not be best for your interests.

♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** It won't take you long to lose points with others if you don't hold yourself accountable for your mistakes. This will be especially true if you put the blame everywhere but on yourself.

♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** Wasted time will become a critical factor in hampering your productivity. The chances for accomplishing your aims will be in direct proportion to the time you spend dilly-dallying.

♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** If you and your mate are facing a difficult decision, try to work it out yourselves instead of discussing it with outsiders, especially in-laws.

♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** In order to spare the feelings of another, you might rework the facts. When the truth comes out, it will anger the person whom you wanted to help.

♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** When it comes to people who helped you acquire something that you badly wanted, of course you should share the rewards. Just don't feel obligated to make a payoff to those who did nothing.

♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** There is a chance that one of your well-intentioned gestures might produce some unintended and unpleasant effects, causing others to have difficulty in discerning your motives.

♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** Under most conditions, you are a rather determined person. However, friends could talk you into doing things you know you shouldn't, causing you much guilt later.

♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** A lot of disappointment is possible if you base your expectations on unrealistic premises. Make it a point to try to see things for what they are and not as you wish them to be.

BERNICE BEDE OSOL

Solution to yesterday's crossword

Letters

Disagreement is one thing; what the GOP is doing is just silly

RE: "GAME: (N.) THAT WHICH IS PLAYED BY BOTH SIDES" (METRO, MARCH 1-3) Letter writer Kevin Metz is right: We live in a system of checks and balances. Unfortunately, that has nothing to do with what's going on now. Anyone truly tired of hearing about Republican obstructionism should perhaps take it up with the party. Sen. Mitch McConnell said from day one that their first priority was to make the president fail. Just the other day, Sen. Lindsey Graham admitted on television, likely inadvertently, that the GOP's sole strategy is to oppose anything and everything the president proposes.

Republicans aren't required to rubber-stamp the president's proposals, but, instead of simply rejecting his ideas reflexively, how about giving them some amount of consideration? Just like the majority of the public indicated they wanted them to do with their votes. This is not "checks and balances"; this is a ridiculously long temper tantrum, and it's destroying both the party and its brand. **MARC BESCHLER, VIA E-MAIL**

Meeting halfway isn't reserved for commuters

It is telling that President Barack Obama chooses to sit down with key leaders after the sequester to discuss what spending cuts and/or service cuts will be decided. Why was he not deeply involved in the process before Americans have to again be hit hard financially? Oh, yes, he said both sides should be willing to compromise, yet he himself would not compromise or even entertain suggestions from the other side. He bashed the Republicans for stalling this sequester, but again, where were Mr. Obama's suggestions, interventions and his promise to compromise? As expected, promise not kept. **CATHY WEISENBURGER, VIA E-MAIL**

There's a very simple solution to the ridiculous budget problems confronting this administration: The Democratically controlled Senate needs to pass a budget. But for the past five years, Obama has instructed Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and his cohorts not to even consider a budget, even though by law a budget must be prepared by the end of February of each year. You see, without a budget, this government can spend without any control. And the spending is the problem. **JOHN E. BEVAN, VIA E-MAIL**

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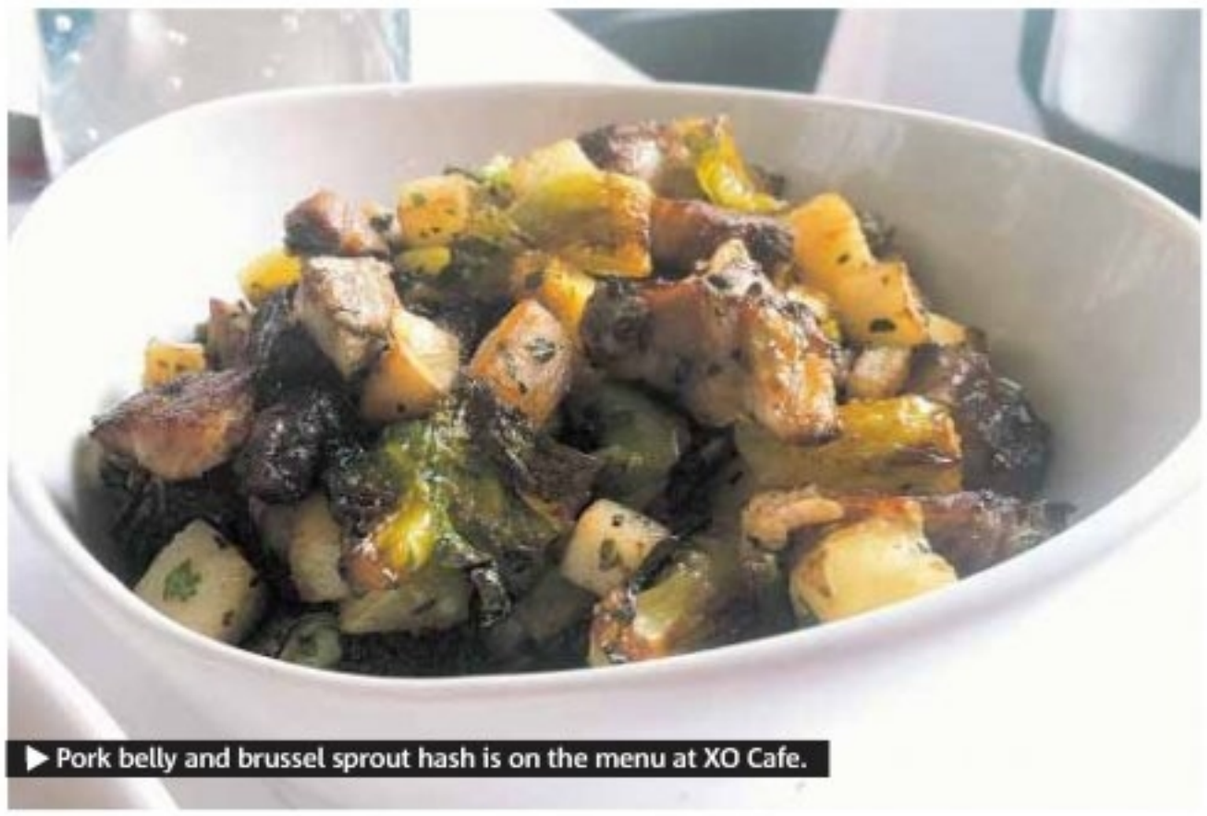
Farm-fresh devotees find big flavors in Providence

- Take a weekend trip to experience Rhode Island's small city with big taste
- A rundown of the area's hottest culinary spots
- Hand-rolled ravioli, anyone?



▶ Pork belly and brussel sprout hash is on the menu at XO Cafe.

As home to culinary school Johnson & Wales, Rhode Island's capital city tends to snag its share of new graduates. For dining patrons, that means there is a steady supply of talent in the city's restaurant kitchens. Add to that a rich cultural heritage from generations of Portuguese and Italian immigrants — and proximity to the rich agriculture of New England and the ocean — and the small city of Providence has become a big destination for foodies, especially those who appreciate the farm-to-table approach.

▶ **Gracie's (194 Washington St., 401-272-7811)** in downtown Providence is another stop for farm-fresh junkies: The best way to eat here is to leave it to the chef. After a few questions from the server — among the friendliest and most helpful in the city — the chef will send out a surprise five-course tasting menu ($75), perhaps with things like a slow-poached farm egg or sea scallops served with a maple-glazed pork belly, all flavored with herbs grown in the restaurant's rooftop garden.

▶ Sunday brunch is a sleepy affair in Providence, but well worth rising for to down two things: A Dirty Red Snapper (a house special bloody mary mix with gin and olive juice) and the pork belly and brussel sprout hash and at **XO Cafe (125 N. Main St., 401-273-9090).** The restaurant defies the farm-to-table stereotype and instead rocks more of a let's-do-one-more-shot-of-whiskey atmosphere. Fittingly, the menu has all kinds of hangover busters, like the XO Benedict, a local short rib served with chive potato pancake and chipotle hollandaise. METRO

— For flights go to www.flymrt.com.

Favorite foodie hangout

One of Providence's most essential reservations is **New Rivers** (7 Steeple St., 401-751-0350), located near Brown University in an 18th-century warehouse. Last year, the long-time chef Beau Vestal took over the restaurant as owner. His speciality? Cured meats including sweet-and-salty pork belly that melts like candy on the tongue, strips of succulent pastrami beef tongue and smoked fish. The menu leans into seasonal ingredients and showcases the state's natural bounty of seafood with dishes like the maltagliati — a pasta dish served with local clams and kale.

▶ New Rivers restaurant is in an 18th-century river warehouse near Brown University. It specializes in cured meats.

Culinary tour

For the serious foodie — as in you like to pick out the chicken you kill for dinner — a visit to **Antonelli Poultry Company** in the city historic Italian Federal Hill district is another must-do. The best way to navigate the area is to sign up for the Savoring Federal Hill culinary tour with chef Cindy Salvato (401-934-2149, $50). Salvato, a former J&W professor, escorts folks through local purveyors, like the live chicken shop and bakeries, to view and taste some of the most authentic just-like-your-noni-made-it goodies. One word of advice: Reserve early. The tour has a months-long wait.

▶ Antonelli's Poultry is one of the last live-chicken shops in Providence.

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Simon channeling inner Ron Burgundy for Phils

Farmhand taking title of clubhouse goof from Worley ◗ Relief pitcher played water polo in high school ◗ Looking to make jump from Double-A to MLB roster

The funkiest dude in the Phillies' major league camp in 2012 was Vance Worley. Vanimal was by far the wackiest character in the clubhouse.

Worley is gone, but there is another out there pitcher in camp. Meet Kyle Simon.

Simon was under the radar as a scuffling Single-A starter in the Orioles' organization. But Simon was converted into a relief pitcher and he took off in Clearwater and Double-A Reading.

Simon doesn't just have an arm. He possesses a goofy sense of humor and an ironic mustache.

"I'm not with the Yankees, so I can have fun with this mustache," Simon said. "The Phillies are good with rules. I don't want to throw Baltimore under the bus, but Philly is a great organization."

Simon might be the most self-deprecating athlete you'll ever meet. When asked about his prowess anywhere off the mound, Simon downplayed his skills.

"All I can do is pitch," Simon said. "I'm a true pitcher. I can't hit or even bunt all that well. I've gotten better at bunting. I've gone from terrible to what I think is decent, but I'm still working at it."

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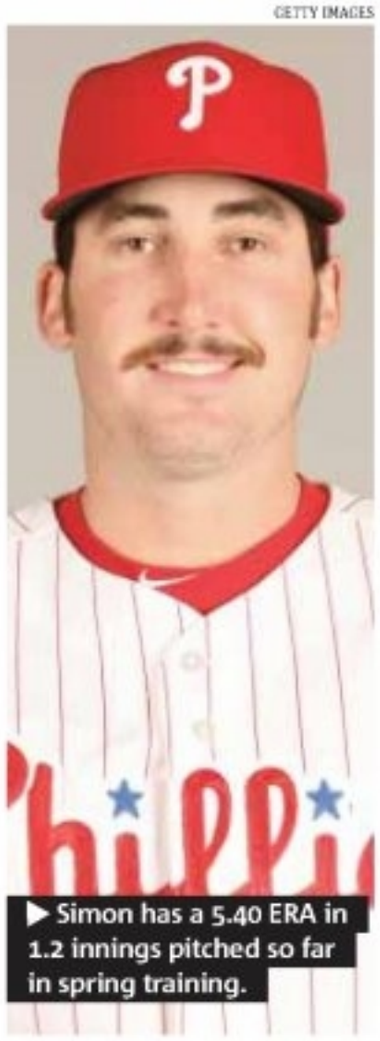

▶ Simon has a 5.40 ERA in 1.2 innings pitched so far in spring training.

Most players in camps didn't only excel at baseball, but led their football, basketball and even ice hockey teams.

"I played water polo," Simon said. "I was the goalie. I didn't have to move around much, which was good for me."

Is water polo a real sport?

"I can't run," Simon said. "I'm not that athletic. Just watch me move around out there."

Simon isn't the most coordinated athlete but the strapping hurler, at 6-foot-6, is the sort of guy who can throw a fastball with movement and keep his teammates loose.

"I've always been the goofball," Simon said. "I like that role."

Simon looks like a cross between a "Saturday Night Live" character Dan Ackroyd played back in the 1970s, "Fred Garvin, male prostitute" and a number of guys Will Ferrell depicted.

"I've heard all about it," Simon said as he pulls out a "Ron Burgundy" T-shirt. "Ferrell was great in the Burgundy movie. I like to catch Ferrell's movies."

Simon would like a major-league gig, but realizes that a jump from Double-A to MLB contender, is a long shot.

"That's all right," Simon said. "Who could have guessed that I would be in this situation a year ago? For me, it's awesome to just be here and give it a shot. It's the most amazing experience. It beats water polo."

Ed Condran
sports@metro.us

Screwballs

A look at some other interesting characters to wear the red pinstripes in recent seasons:

Roger McDowell: One of the all-time great pranksters, McDowell appeared in a "Seinfeld" episode as himself.

Mitch Williams: Wild Thing was quirky. When throwing out the first pitch prior to a 2009 playoff game, he fired it into the screen.

Turk Wendell: Turk brushed his teeth in between innings, jumped over the base line on his way to the dugout and chewed black licorice before each appearance.

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▶ Williams

Darren Daulton: Whatever happened with that Mayan calendar thing, Dutch? Are we still here?

In the news

Lannan, Phillies blank Pirates

John Lannan, the expected fifth starter in the Phils' rotation, tossed three shutout innings yesterday in a 5-0 win over the Pittsburgh Pirates.

The only hit that Lannan allowed was a two-out double in the first inning. At the plate, Michael Young went 2-for-4 with two RBIs. The Phillies are 5-5-1 in Grapefruit League play.

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Flyers can't afford to relax after getting back to .500

Now that the Flyers have climbed back to the .500 mark, there's no time for patting themselves on the back. With four games in the next six days — some against the East's elite — the Flyers need to keep their skates on the gas.

"Hopefully, it gives us a little boost," said Claude Giroux. "There aren't a lot of games left. It's halfway through the season."

Facing the Rangers tonight at the Garden, the Flyers will become the NHL's first team to reach the midway point. Then they'll get right back at it Thursday versus the hated Penguins. On Saturday, the Flyers head up to Boston.

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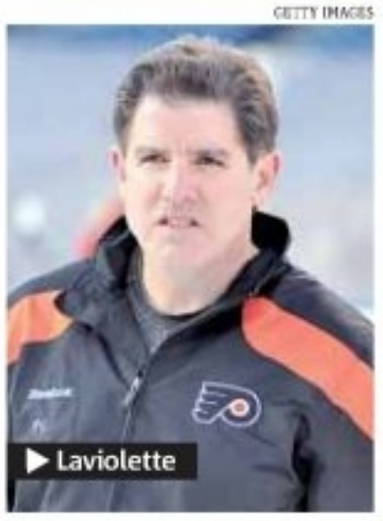

▶ Laviolette

"We are aware that in March we play a lot of very good teams," said Giroux. "It's where we want it. But it doesn't matter who we play. All we know is we need to work on our game."

Coach Peter Laviolette, who will likely plug Mike Knuble into the lineup for the suspended Harry Zolnierczyk, realizes what's at stake, too.

"We have to win hockey games," the coach said. "We have a big month right now. We have to put some wins together in order to move ourselves up in the standings. We need to continue to push the month of March."

JON MARKS

Metro's NBA power rankings | by Jimmy Toscano

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1 MIAMI HEAT

HEAT (43-14)
A 14-game win streak. Is that good? Nope. It's freakin' awesome — and so are the Heat right now. This team hasn't lost in over a month, and LeBron James is playing at otherwordly levels.

THUNDER (43-16)
A tough loss in Denver was followed by a big win against the Clippers to lock OKC in at the No. 2 spot this week. Miami No. 1, OKC No. 2. It's 2012 all over again.

SPURS (47-14)
Tony Parker will be down for about a month. He's been the reason the Spurs have overcome injuries. Can they return the favor in March?

CLIPPERS (43-19)
Los Angeles is still one of the deepest teams in the league, which will be huge for them in this year's Western Conference playoffs.

GRIZZLIES (39-19)
The second hottest team in the league behind the Heat has gone 9-1 in their last 10 games, losing to just — you guessed it — the Heat.

PACERS (38-22)
The last game the Heat lost was against Indiana and the two will play again, this time in Miami, on Sunday. We'll learn a lot about the Pacers here.

NUGGETS (38-22)
Say what you want about the Nuggets' lack of star power, but Ty Lawson is averaging 23. 1 points and 7.6 assists over his last 10 games.

KNICKS (35-21)
The Knicks posted 37 points in the second quarter against the Heat, but just 34 points combined in the third and fourth.

HAWKS (33-25)
At the start of this week, the Hawks were holding down the No. 4 slot in the East. But they were also just two games from falling down to No. 7.

BULLS (34-26)
Joakim Noah looks like a man amongst boys out there as of late, but the Bulls are playing below-.500 basketball since late January.

NETS (34-26)
Hopefully Jay-Z is too busy planning his summer stadium tour with Justin Timberlake to notice that his team has lost four of its last five games.

ROCKETS (33-28)
What does a No. 1-ranked offense and a No. 29-ranked defense get you? Fun basketball games. Unfortunately "fun" doesn't often equal "success."

CELTICS (31-27)
Four games in six days for the Celtics, including a back-to-back on the road. They could easily go 4-0 or 0-4 in this stretch.

WARRIORS (33-27)
The Warriors have two big problems. First, they don't play much defense. Second, they can't win on the road. That usually spells an early playoff exit.

JAZZ (32-27)
The good news: The Jazz are 22-8 at home this season. The bad news: Five of their next six are on the road, where they've gone 10-19.

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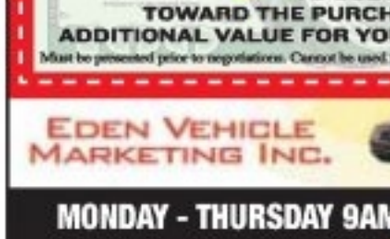
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▶ Moultrie scored six points in six minutes of action Sunday night in the Sixers' 90-87 loss to Washington.

Bynum suffers setback, Moultrie earning burn

◗ Sixers staying positive despite losing streak ◗ All-Star center may need knee surgery ◗ Rookie big man getting more minutes

With each loss, it's sounding less and less likely that Andrew Bynum will suit up for the Sixers.

Bynum ruffled a few feathers last Friday when he admitted that he didn't want to risk shortening his career by playing with bum knees.

"I feel like it's my life," Bynum said. "I'm 25, and I don't want to have no cartilage, because that's really bad. I don't want to play in pain."

The 7-footer reportedly suffered a setback while practicing and is considering arthroscopic surgery. Bynum is a free agent after the season. He's earning $16.9 million in 2012-13.

"He's unrestricted, he can go anywhere he wants to and it's his career," said

▶ Bynum

Sixers GM Tony DiLeo. "That's just something we'll have to see. We just don't have all the information now."

DiLeo said Bynum is still Plan A. The Sixers are fighting for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference, trailing Milwaukee by 6.5 games. They followed up an upset win over Golden State Saturday with Sunday's devastating loss to lowly Washington. METRO

Moultrie makes solid progress

Rookie big man Arnett Moultrie is finally working his way into Doug Collins' rotation.

He scored six points in six minutes of action Sunday night, after finishing with four points in almost eight minutes Saturday. Moultrie's teammates are excited by his progress.

"Wow, that dude is athletic," Jrue Holiday said. "He can jump, you know, you see little spurts here and there. Arnett, I think he can really help us. He brings energy from the jump, somebody that can get rebounds and fight for rebounds and play above the rim."

Moulrie was the No. 27 pick in the first round last year, acquired in a draft-day trade with Miami.

Collins admitted that sometimes he forgets about the 6-foot-10 Moultrie at the end of games. The coach wants to put his best five players out there in crucial situations.

"Arnett is getting better, which is encouraging," Collins said. "I talked to him about his conditioning, where he can get that up and play longer stretches." METRO

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Study conducted at Temple University, Virtual Environment and Postural Orientation (VEPO) Lab
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This research is supported by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development of the National Institutes of Health under Award Number R01HD069769

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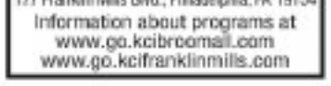

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